

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TS
SUBJ: MESTIRI ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PARTY

1. AT NOON, JUNE 14, 1978, THE OFFICES OF AHMED MESTIRI
ISSUED A THREE-PAGE COMMUNIQUE TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
PRESS. THE COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCED THAT MESTIRI AND A
NINE-MEMBER FOUNDING COMMITTEE YESTERDAY HAD DEPOSITED
INSTRUMENTS OF INCORPORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.
THE NEW PARTY WILL BE KNOWN AS THE MOVEMENT OF SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS (MDS). ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE, OBJECTIVES
OF THE MDS INCLUDE:

A. PRESERVATION OF THE DIGNITY OF MAN, DEFENSE OF HIS
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND PUBLIC LIBERTIES, AS WELL AS THE
DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLICAN REGIME.

B. TO MAKE DEMOCRACY THE FOUNDATION OF PUBLIC LIFE.

C. THE INSTALLATION OF A SOCIALIST REGIME WHICH REJECTS
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HUMAN EXPLOITATION AND PUTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT THE
SERVICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE.

D. TO WORK FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NORTH AFRICAN UNITY AS
A STEP TOWARD ARAB UNITY AND CONSOLIDATION OF OUR
SOLIDARITY WITH THE ISLAMIC AND AFRICAN STATES AND FOR THE
TRIUMPH OF THE IDEALS OF PEACE, OF PEOPLES' LIBERTY, AND OF

COOPERATION BETWEEN NATIONS.

2. THE FOUNDING COMMITTEE IS CHARGED WITH COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMALITIES TO GIVE THE PARTY A LEGAL EXISTENCE AND TO HOLD THE FIRST NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS WITHIN SIX MONTHS FOLLOWING THE GRANTING OF LEGAL STATUS. THE FOUNDING COMMITTEE IS COMPOSED OF AHMED MESTIRI (SECRETARY GENERAL), MUSTAPHA BEN JAAFAR, AMOR BENMAHMOUD, HAMMOUDA BEN SLAMA, ISMAIL BOULAHIA, ABDELHAY CHOUIKHA, DALI JAZI, ABDESSATAR LADJENI, MOHAMED MOUADA, ALL ASSISTANT SECRETARIES GENERAL.

(THE MAJORITY ARE FROM THE CAPITAL, ARE IN THEIR LATE 30'S OR EARLY 40'S, AND HAVE ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS.) THE COMMUNIQUE RELATES THAT THE PARTY'S PLATFORM WILL SOON BE MADE PUBLIC.

3. THE SECOND AND THIRD PAGES OF THE COMMUNIQUE RESPECTIVELY WERE A BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH ON EACH FOUNDING OFFICER AND A "REMINDER" OF THE CHAPTERS AND VERSE WHICH PERMIT ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW ASSOCIATIONS UNDER TUNISIAN LAW.

4. COMMENT: MESTIRI'S GROUP HAS BEEN PUBLISHING ER-RAI, WHICH IS GENERALLY CRITICAL OF THE REGIME, SINCE DECEMBER 1977. THE FIRST EDITION OF ITS SISTER WEEKLY, DEMOCRATIE, IS SLATED TO APPEAR ON THE STANDS NEXT WEEK. CERTAIN SPECULATION UNCLASSIFIED

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EXISTS SURROUNDING THE TIMING OF THIS PRESS COMMUNIQUE: ITS COINCIDENCE WITH PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA'S CURRENT VISIT TO DAKAR IS CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT SINCE SENEGAL IS A THIRD-WORLD STATE DISTINGUISHED BY HER PRESIDENT'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF MULTIPLE PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS. STRATEGIC DATES FOR THE FIRST MDS PARTY CONGRESS MAY BE ANOTHER CONSIDERATION. WITH SOME SURPRISE, WE NOTE THE OMISSION OF CAID ESSEBSI, MUNIR BEJI, AND HASIB BEN AMAR FROM THE FOUNDING COMMITTEE. THE FIRST TWO ARE LAW PARTNERS AND HAVE BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN THIS GROUP, AND BEN AMAR IS THE EDITOR ZOF ER-RAI. FRENCH AND ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE MDS COMMUNIQUE OF JUNE 13 WILL FOLLOW BY POUCH. MULCAHY

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